

Survey # F-2-98

Widow Tritt House

Approximate date September 14, 1862

Street Address: 6220 Mountain Church Road

Town, State: Burkittsville, MD (vicinity)

private X, public

This property is included in the survey of resources associated with the Civil War Battle of South Mountain, which occurred on September 14, 1862. Located on the west side of Mountain Church Road, the Widow Tritt House is a one and a half story log building on limestone foundations. The original section of the house has been added onto on several occasions, effectively tripling its size. Facing east and fronting directly on the west side of Mountain Church Rd., the house is sited on a one acre lot as it has since before the September 1862 battle for Crampton's Gap. The Widow Tritt House was centrally located in the Confederate line of defense formed along the stone walls of Mountain Church Road during the battle at Crampton's Gap. Regiments from Brigadier General William Mahone's Brigade under the command of Colonel Thomas T. Munford occupied this central section. Situated as it is directly on the road the house undoubtedly had soldiers positioned on either side.

Photo Reference: Photo #

Form Prepared By: Paula S. Reed, PhD and Edith B. Wallace
Woodward-Clyde
200 Orchard Ridge Drive
Gaithersburg, MD 20878

Date: February, 1998

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Survey No. F-2-98

Magi No.

DOE ☐ yes ☐ no

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic Widow Tritt House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 6220 Mountain Church Road

☐ not for publication

city, town Burkittsville

☒ vicinity of

congressional district 6

state Maryland

county Frederick

3. Classification

Category☐ district☐ building(s)☒ structure☐ site☐ object**Ownership**☐ public☒ private☐ both**Public Acquisition**☐ in process☐ being considered☒ not applicable**Status**☒ occupied☐ unoccupied☐ work in progress**Accessible**☐ yes: restricted☐ yes: unrestricted☒ no**Present Use**☐ agriculture☐ commercial☐ educational☐ entertainment☐ government☐ industrial☐ military☐ museum☐ park☒ private residence☐ religious☐ scientific☐ transportation☐ other:

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Harold R. and Wanda M. King

street & number 6220 Mountain Church Road

telephone no.:

city, town Burkittsville

state and zip code MD 21718

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Frederick County Courthouse

Liber 2104

street & number 100 W. Patrick Street

Folio 10

city, town Frederick

state MD

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date

☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records

city, town

state

7. Description

Survey No. F-2-98

Condition

☐ excellent ☐ deteriorated
☒ good ☐ ruins
☐ fair ☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date of move _____

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Located on the west side of Mountain Church Road, the Widow Tritt House is a one and a half story log building on limestone foundations. The original section of the house has been added onto on several occasions, effectively tripling its size. Facing east and fronting directly on the west side of Mountain Church Rd., the house is sited on a one acre lot as it has since before the September 1862 battle for Crampton's Gap.

The east elevation of the old section of the house has three bays, with a central entrance and a central chimney. The stone foundation is partially above ground causing the first story to be above ground and accessed by a raised, hipped roof porch. Windows are two over two, with single pane or six light sash on the upper half story. The house is covered with insul brick siding, which probably conceals an earlier wooden siding. The roof is sheet metal. The central chimney is constructed of brick and may indicate 18th or early 19th century German building traditions. Several modern additions have been built in succession on the south elevation. A 20th century garage is located to the back of the property.

While exterior finished and features date from the 20th century, the actual structure could be much older.

8. Significance

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Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other(specify)	

Specific dates	September 14, 1862	Builder/Architect	
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check: Applicable Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

and/or

Applicable Exceptions: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☒ national ☐ state ☐ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The Widow Tritt House was centrally located in the Confederate line of defense formed along the stone walls of Mountain Church Road during the battle at Crampton's Gap on September 14, 1862 (see 1862 Engineer's Map, Crampton's Gap). Regiments from Brigadier General William Mahone's Brigade under the command of Colonel Thomas T. Munford occupied this central section.¹ Situated as it is directly on the road the house undoubtedly had soldiers positioned on either side.

The stone wall which lined the east and west sides of Mountain Church Road was significant to the defense of Crampton's Gap. Colonel Thomas T. Munford reported, "...[I] instructed the officers commanding the two fragments of regiments (infantry) of Mahone's brigade to hold the post at all hazards. I posted the infantry behind a stone wall, at the base of the mountain, and running parallel with it..."² This placement so impressed the Union commanders, they delayed three hours preparing for large assault, fearing greater numbers of Confederate forces. Colonel Joseph J. Bartlett, General Henry Slocum's Division wrote: "I was ordered by General Slocum to halt until he could mass his troops and arrange the plan of the assault, as the appearance of the mountain pass convinced all that artillery was of no avail against it, and that nothing but a combined and vigorous charge of infantry would carry the mountain....My line of skirmishers found the enemy at the base of the mountain, safely lodged behind a strong stone wall. Their entire line, being now developed, exhibited a large force."³

While the placement of the Widow Tritt House on Mountain Church Rd. is incidental to the battle, no building still standing today within the Crampton's Gap battlefield saw as much direct action as this humble home.

The discovery on September 13, 1862 of General Robert E. Lee's Special Order #191, the Lost Order, in a field near Frederick where the Confederates had camped precipitated the march of the Army of the Potomac toward South Mountain along the Old National Pike. The turnpike crossed the mountain running west toward the center of Lee's divided army. Had Union commander,

¹James V. Murfin, *The Gleam of Bayonets*, New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1965, p.182.

²O.R., Vol XIX, Part I, p. 826.

³War College Guide, p.79, from O.R., Vol.XIX, Part I, pp.388-89

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DOE ☐ yes ☐ no

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would to President Lincoln, the Battle of South Mountain might have ended differently.⁴

The Special Order #191 detailed General Lee's deployment of the Army of Northern Virginia in September 1862. In addition to the siege of Harper's Ferry by three divisions under Stonewall Jackson from the west and two divisions under Lafayette McLaws from the northeast, the orders described the location of Robert E. Lee and James Longstreet with two divisions at Hagerstown and D.H.Hill's division, alone at Boonsboro, just below Turner's Gap. With the knowledge of the divided nature of Lee's army on the west side of South Mountain, and the small defensive line at the pass, McClellan felt confident in his army's ability to catch Lee's forces in this vulnerable position. However, McClellan's infamous cautiousness and over-estimation of the size of his opponent, delayed the movement of the Army of the Potomac for half a day. The result of his slow approach to the pass at South Mountain was to give the Confederate defenders time to reinforce their tenuous position and begin pulling their divided army together again at Sharpsburg.

The Widow Tritt House is secondarily significant as an example of regional vernacular architecture. The 1858 Isaac Bond Map of Frederick County shows "Mrs. Tritt" at a dwelling at this location and Civil War maps identify the place as occupied by Widow Tritt. Log was the construction material of choice in the 18th and 19th centuries in central and western Maryland, especially for modest houses like this one. The massive central chimney could suggest that the house is older than it appears from the outside with its 20th century coverings and additions. According to Frederick County deed records, Susan Tritt acquired a one acre property called "Willard's Lot" from Samuel and Lydia Wetnight on July 7, 1857 (Liber ES 9, Folio 515). It was willed by Susan Tritt to Lydia A. Grams who acquired the property June 12, 1871. It remained in the Grams family until 1973, maintaining the same one acre size for the entire time.

⁴Stephen W. Sears, "Fire on the Mountain," *Blue and Gray*, December-January, 1986-86, p. 11

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HISTORICAL CONTEXT:

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

Geographic Organization: Piedmont

Chronological/Developmental Period(s):

Agricultural-Industrial Transition, A.D. 1815-1870

Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme(s):

Military

Architecture, Landscape Architecture and Community Planning

Resource Type:

Category: Building

Historic Environment: Rural

Historic Function(s) and Use(s):

Domestic/single dwelling

Known Design Source: None

9. Major Bibliographical References

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Books

- Hartwig, D. Scott, Civil War Regiments, A Journal of the American Civil War, Vol 5, #3, "Antietam, the Maryland Campaign of 1862". Article entitled "My God, Be Careful! The Morning Battle of Fox's Gap", Savas Publishing Co., Campbell, CA, 1997.
- Luvaas, Jay and Harold W. Nelson eds., The U.S. Army War College Guide to the Battle of Antietam, The Maryland Campaign of 1862, Harper Collins Publishers, Washington, 1987.
- Murfin, James V., The Glean of Bayonets, The Battle of Antietam and Robert E. Lee's Maryland Campaign, September 1862, Thomas Yoseloff, New York, 1965.
- Roth, Dave, "The General's Tour of South Mountain", Blue & Gray Magazine, Dec-Jan, 1986-87.
- Schildt, John W., The Ninth Corps, At Antietam, Chewsville, Maryland, 1988.
- Sears, Stephen W., "Fire On The Mountain, The Battle of South Mountain September 14, 1862", Blue & Gray Magazine, Dec-Jan, 1986-87.
- Sears, Stephen W., Landscape Turned Red, The Battle of Antietam, Ticknor and Fields, New York, 1983.
- Swinton, William, Army of the Potomac, Smithmark Publisher, New York, 1995.
- U.S. War Department, The War of Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, Series I, Vol XIX, Parts I and II, Government Printing Office, Washington, 1880-1901.

Manuscripts

- rye, Dennis, National Register Nomination Form, South Mountain Battlefields F-4-17-A,B,C, 1986.




Maps

- The Official Military Atlas of the Civil War, Plate 27, Gramercy Books, New York, 1983.
- Engineers Maps, 1862, National Register Nomination, South Mountain Battlefields F-4-17-A,B,C, 1986.
- Macombe Map, 1861.

F-2-98

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References DO NOT COMPLETE UTM REFERENCES

B   

Zone Easting Northing

D

[illegible]

H 

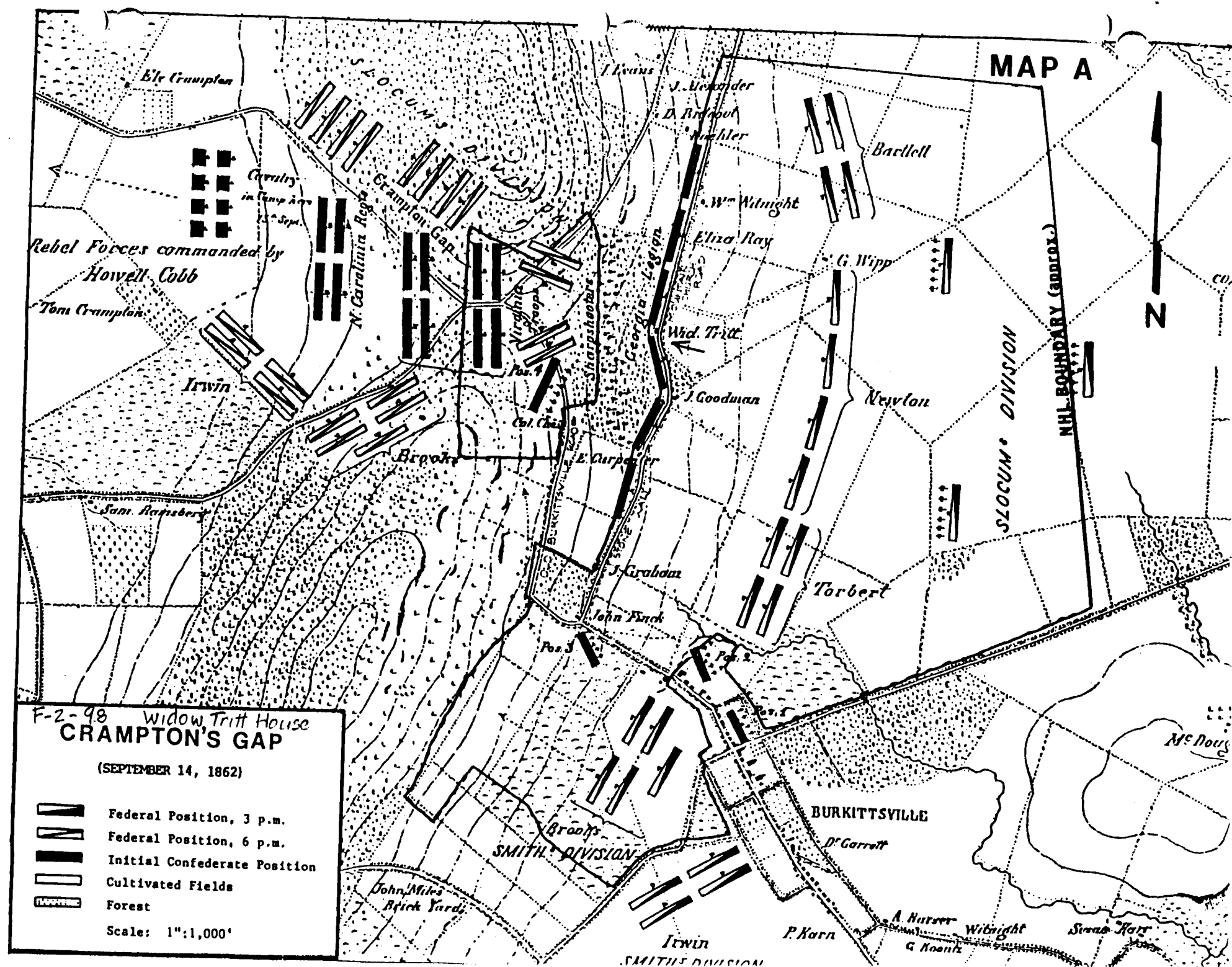
The property of 1 acre total is fronted along the eastern boundary by Mountain Church Road. The house is located in the southern eastern corner of the property fronting directly on the road. Frederick Co. Tax Map #74, parcel 175.

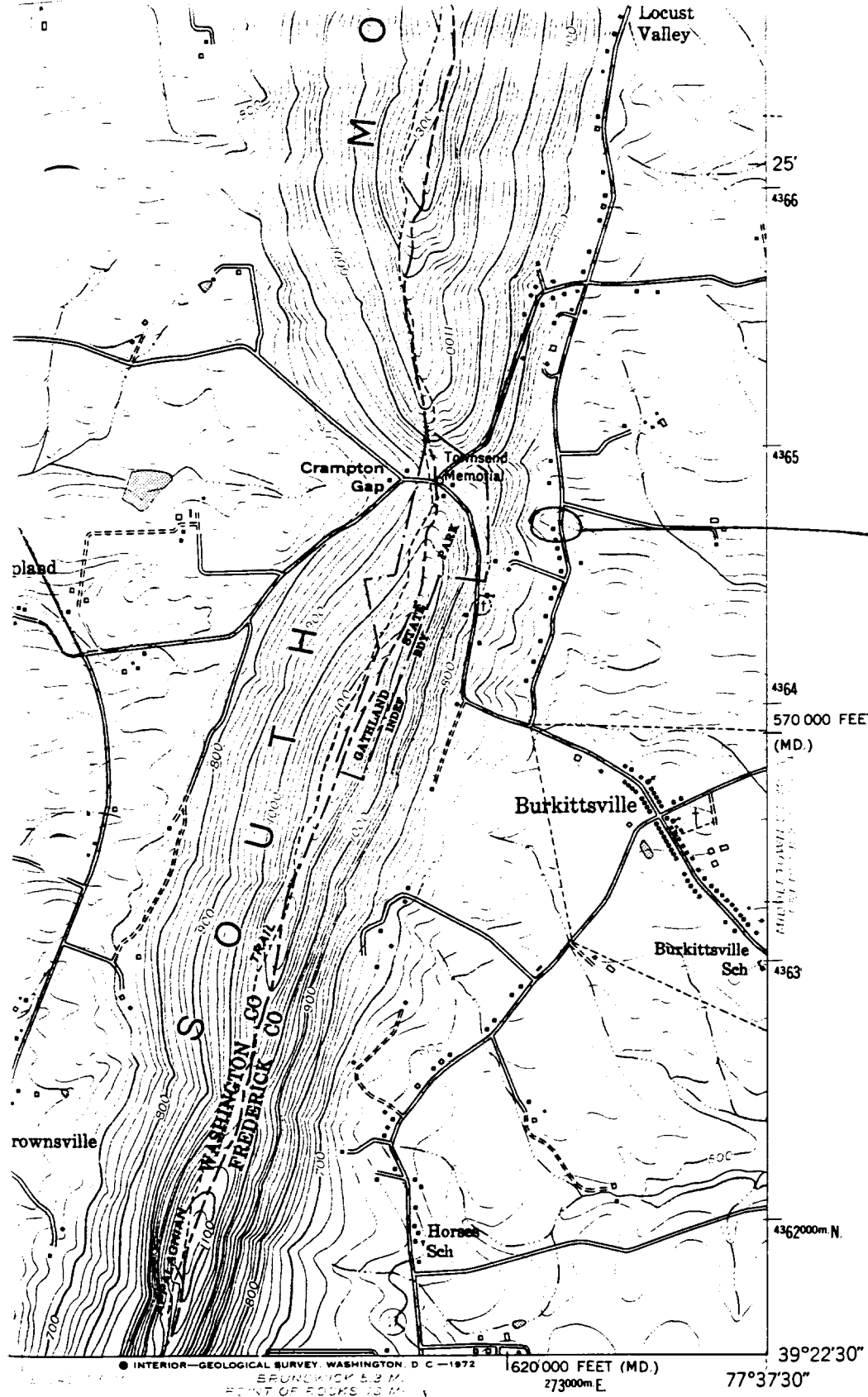
state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

state MD 20878

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
People's Resource Center
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023
410-514-7000

MAP A





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WIDOW TRITT HOUSE

ROAD CLASSIFICATION 1963

- Heavy-duty ——— Light-duty ———
- Medium-duty ——— Unimproved dirt ———
- U. S. Route
- State Route

KEEDYSVILLE, MD.-W. VA.

N3922.5-W7737.5/7.5

1953

MD-55



INSET LOCATION





25

12.1.1941

Friday 12.1.1941

13.1.1941

13. January 1941

Monday 13.1.1941

Tuesday 14.1.1941

Wednesday 15.1.1941

Thursday 16.1.1941